

Chief Legalman Mark Adams, deputy Reserve legalman 1A director, meets with Legalman 2nd Class Denise Oliveira, to discuss plans for continuing training and mentoring opportunities. All Reservists converting to Legalman are assigned a mentor to help guide them during their transition into the legal community.



RESERVE LEGALMAN:

Creative Training for Creative Service

story by **Mass Communications Specialist 1st Class Harrold Henck**,
Naval Justice School Public Affairs



With thousands of Sailors serving worldwide, it is crucial that none are distracted from their duties over legal matters. To alleviate such concerns, the Navy provides them with valuable support via the men and women who serve as legalmen.

The Job

The Navy's legalmen are trained paralegals who assist Judge Advocate General (JAG) lawyers with processing claims, conducting administrative hearings and performing many duties related to courts-martial and non-judicial punishment. They also assist Sailors with wills, taxes and powers of attorney.

"A great deal of law is procedural and this had led to a growing demand for trained personnel to assist JAG lawyers ... not only with court cases, but also to handle routine matters in the Navy's legal service offices," said Master Chief Legalman Thomas Giancola, who serves as manpower director for the Reserve legalman community.

Ironically, the legalman rate was closed for three years due to over-manning and a contemplated union with yeomen. Merger plans have since been dropped and the rating is now wide-open for hard-charging Reservists with an interest in law and a keen attention to detail.



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Chief Legalman Edward Crews, Reserve Legalman Coordinator for the Naval Justice School, reviews student paperwork for errors. Attention to detail is vital when completing legal forms and conducting case research.

High-Caliber Training and Students

Offered annually each spring, the Reserve Legalman Accession Course at Naval Justice School in Newport, R.I., is an intensive six-week program that offers fast-paced training in multiple areas of civil law and military justice. Students engage in hands-on scenarios ranging from general legal assistance to criminal investigations and courts-martial. Experienced chief legalmen and JAG officers provide the instruction.

"The training includes lessons in Navy legal, administrative and clerical functions, as well as participation in practical applications," said Chief Legalman Edward Crews (SW/FMF) who is the Naval Justice School's Reserve course coordinator. "The goal is to adequately prepare Reservists to work alongside their active counterparts should they be mobilized or volunteer."

To accommodate Reservists' traditional two-week training schedules, students have the option of attending all six-weeks at once, or to break the school into three modules of two weeks annually. Last spring, 27 Reservists attended all or part of the school. Only those who completed all three phases, however, are considered fully trained legalmen. Until then, converting students perform in-rate training.

"I found the instructors to be tough but caring," said Legalman 2nd Class Melissa Tidmore, a paralegal with the US Attorney's Office in San Antonio, Texas. "Our competency is a reflection on their instruction, so they were very thorough. They really wanted us prepared to assume our duties in the fleet."

Most Reservists convert to legalman from other rates and, via their civilian experience, often possess a diversity of skills not found on active-duty. The most recent class included paralegals from a variety of professions including banking, immigration, civil and criminal law.

"A lot of Reservists come to us already trained as experts by virtue of their civilian or active-duty experiences," said Crews. "For us, the integration is the teaching and practical application. The experience and variety of the Reservist's expertise is hard to match – and they're always willing to share."



Students from Reserve Legalman Accession Class 08010 pose outside Naval Justice School in Newport, R.I. at the start of an intensive six-week course that offers fast-paced training in multiple areas of civil law and military justice. Reserve students, all of whom are converting from other rates, engage in hands-on scenarios ranging from general legal assistance to criminal investigations and courts-martial.

Cross-Pollination

Although many Reservists come with professional backgrounds, this is not to say they already know everything. On the contrary, many students speak highly of their training and of the valuable experience gained from their instructors and from each other.

"I have extensive experience ranging from DUI to capital murder cases," said Legalman 2nd Class Chad Stanberry, a criminal investigator with the Mecklenburg county public defender's office in Charlotte, N.C. "Being a legalman allows me to share my skills with my shipmates as well as learn new ones."

The chance to acquire new skills is also an incentive.

"I work with commercial real estate in the legal department at Bank of America in Raleigh," said Legalman 2nd Class Ethel Foster, a Reservist from North Carolina. "My legalman training has given me a new appreciation for court reporting and other skill sets that I had not previously been exposed to."

The opportunity to acquire these skills leads to a wide assortment of Reservists attracted to the legalman rate.

"This is a win-win for the Reserve: our students not only learn from their training, but they can also teach their shipmates new skills," said Giancola. "Our Sailors and the Navy reap the benefits."

Master Chief Legalman Thomas Giancola, Reserve Legalman Manpower Director, educates new legalman students about billet assignments and expected duties and rotations for their new careers.



Model Mentoring and Expanded Training

All new Reserve legalmen are assigned a seasoned shipmate to serve as their mentor and counselor. The mentor is always a senior participant who demonstrates the performance traits that lead to success in the Navy; in short, someone a legalman protégé would want to emulate.

"The goal is to give all new Reserve legalmen a better sense of how their career should progress, what milestones they should attain, and to give them resources to make appropriate career decisions," said Giancola.

To ensure that new legalmen have a chance to follow their mentor's plans, creative opportunities for training have also been implemented. Many billets have been reallocated and flex drilling is more routine. In addition, Reserve legalmen are fulfilling "tiger team" roles and going where they are most needed – to serve the Navy's needs as well as to gain the additional training they require to advance in their careers.

"We want our legalmen exposed to all aspects of the rate and to become well-rounded. In so doing, we are also learning how to best utilize the valuable experience the Reserve can offer the active duty," Giancola said.



"Our competency is a reflection on their instruction."

Growing Importance of the Rate

Every day the integration between active and Reserve becomes greater and more evident. Within the Legalman rate this fusion is even clearer. As one of the Navy's smaller communities, the needs of the Reserve to augment the active-duty are many and varied.

Although most are working in Navy legal service offices at home and abroad, a growing number of Reservists are fulfilling mobilized billets in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, and the Horn of Africa. While several IAs are supporting humanitarian and joint force operations, the majority are deployed in support of the global war on terrorism.

Chief Legalman Mark Adams, deputy director for Reserve mobilized support, noted that many Reserve legalmen are deployed to Iraq with Task Force 134, the body charged with detainee command and control. According to Adams, the



Legalman 2nd Class Chad Stanberry prepares a mock investigation report in preparation for filing charges of desertion and larceny for a simulated administration board exercise. Reservists must quickly become familiar with multiple types of reports and formats needed to perform their duties in the field.

Reservist's presence is helping the Iraqis to rebuild their correctional and law enforcement systems.

"Our Reserve legalmen are protecting due process rights of detainees as well as ensuring that those who should be released are, and the one's who shouldn't are not," Adams said.

"This is incredibly important work for our legalmen."

Whether providing legal assistance to Sailors, litigation work for JAC attorneys, or prosecuting those involved with the global war on terrorism, the Navy's Reserve legalmen are in high demand. The instruction they receive, from their initial accession at Naval Justice School, through their on-going mentoring and tiger team training, is paying off.

For more information about Navy legalmen, contact your command career counselor or the Reserve Legalman Community Conversion Coordinator, Senior Chief Legalman Erin Meadows, at erin.meadows@navy.mil. **TNR**

Did you know the Navy Reserve has a course for Reserve Unit Leaders?



Our Web site is located on www.navyreserve.navy.mil, click on commands, then click on find a command and look for "Professional Development Center." If you have any questions, please contact Lt. Cmdr Brock Miller at brock.miller@navy.mil or 504-678-2063.

US Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Robert Kerns

We do! The Navy Reserve Professional Development Center has the Navy Reserve Unit Management course (formerly Navy Reserve Unit Leader) designed to provide Reserve Unit CO, OIC and other Unit Leaders with executive knowledge from CRNFC subject matter experts centered on personnel management (N1), operations (N3), training (N7) and finance (N8).